NUMB. LV.

The GUARDIAN.

——quis enim virtutem amplectitur ipsam
Præmia si tollas. Juv.

Thursday, May 14. 1713.

IT is usual with Polemical Writers to object ill Designs to their Adversaries. This turns their Argument into Satyr, which instead of shewing an Error in the Understanding, tends only to expose the Morals of those they write against. I shall not act after this manner with respect to the *Free-Thinkers*. Virtue, and the Happiness of Society, are the great Ends which all Men ought to promote, and some of that Sect would be thought to have at Heart above the rest of Mankind. But supposing those who make that Profession to carry on a good Design in the Simplicity of their Hearts, and according to their best Knowledge, yet it is much to be feared, those well-meaning Souls while they endeavoured to recommend Virtue, have in reality been advancing the Interests of Vice; which as I take to proceed from their Ignorance of Humane Nature, we may hope, when they become sensible of their Mistake, they will, in consequence of that beneficent Principle they pretend to act upon, reform their Practice for the future.

The Sages whom I have in my Eye speak of Virtue as the most amiable thing in the World; but at the same time that they extol her Beauty, they take care to lessen her Portion. Such Innocent Creatures are they, and so great Strangers to the World, that they think this a likely Method to increase the Number of her Admirers.

Virtue has in her self the most engaging Charms; and Christianity, as it places her in the strongest Light, and adorned with all her Native Attractions, so it kindles a new Fire in the Soul, by adding to them the unutterable Rewards which attend her Votaries in an Eternal State. Or if there are Men of a Saturnine and heavy Complexion, who are not easily lifted up by Hope, there is the Prospect of everlasting Punishments to agitate their Souls, and frighten them into the Practice of Virtue, and an Aversion from Vice.

Whereas your sober *Free-Thinkers* tell you, that Virtue indeed is beautiful, and Vice deformed; the former deserves your Love, and the latter your Abhorrence; but then, it is for their own Sake, or on Account of the Good and Evil which immediately attend them, and are inseparable from their respective Natures. As for the Immortality of the Soul, or Eternal Punishments and Rewards, those are openly ridiculed, or rendered suspicious by the most sly and laboured Artifice.

I will not say, these Men act treacherously in the Cause of Virtue; but, will any one deny, that they act foolishly, who pretend to advance the Interest of it by destroying or weakning the strongest Motives to it, which are accommodated to all Capacities, and fitted to work on all Dispositions, and enforcing those alone which can affect only a generous and exalted Mind?

Surely *they* must be destitute of Passion themselves, and unacquainted with the Force it hath on the Minds of others, who can imagine that the meer Beauty of Fortitude, Temperance and Justice, is sufficient to sustain the Mind of Man in a severe Course of Self-denial against all the Temptations of present Profit and Sensuality.

It is my Opinion the *Free-Thinkers* shou'd be treated as a Sett of poor ignorant Creatures, that have not Sense to discover the Excellency of Religion; it being evident those Men are no Witches, nor likely to be guilty of any deep Design, who proclaim aloud to the World, that they have less Motives to Honesty than the rest of their Fellow Subjects; who have all the Inducements to the Exercise of any Virtue which a *Free-Thinker* can possibly have, and besides, the Expectation of never-ending Happiness or Misery, as the Consequence of their Choice.

Are not Men actuated by their Passions, and are not Hope and Fear the most powerful of our Passions? and are there any Objects which can rouse and awaken our Hopes and Fears, like those Prospects

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ſpects that warm and penetrate the Heart of a Chriſtian, but are not regarded by a *Free-Thinker*?

It is not only a clear Point, that a Chriſtian breaks through ſtronger Engagements whenever he ſurrenders himſelf to commit a criminal Action, and is ſtung with a ſharper Remorſe after it, than a *Free-Thinker*; but it ſhou'd even ſeem that a Man who believes no future State, wou'd act a fooliſh Part in being thoroughly honeſt. For what Reaſon is there why ſuch a one ſhould poſtpone his own private Intereſt or Pleaſure to the doing his Duty? If a Chriſtian foregoes ſome preſent Advantage for the ſake of his Conſcience, he acts accountably, becauſe it is with the View of gaining ſome greater future Good. But he that, having no ſuch View, ſhould yet Conſcientiouſly deny himſelf a preſent Good in any Incident where he may ſave Appearances, is altogether as ſtupid as he that would truſt him at ſuch a Juncture.

It will, perhaps, be ſaid, that Virtue is her own Reward, that a natural Gratification attends good Actions, which is alone ſufficient to excite Men to the Performance of them. But although there is nothing more lovely than Virtue, and the Practice of it is the ſureſt way to ſolid, natural Happineſs even in this Life; yet Titles, Eſtates, and fantaſtical Pleaſures, are more ardently ſought after by moſt Men, than the natural Gratifications of a reaſonable Mind; and it cannot be denied, that Virtue and Innocence are not always the readieſt Methods to attain that ſort of Happineſs. Beſides, the Fumes of Paſſion muſt be allayed, and Reaſon muſt burn brighter than ordinary, to enable Men to ſee and reliſh all the native Beauties and Delights of a virtuous Life. And tho' we ſhould grant our *Free-Thinkers* to be a Sett of refined Spirits, capable only of being enamoured of Virtue, yet what would become of the Bulk of Mankind who have groſs Underſtandings, but lively Senſes and ſtrong Paſſions? What a Deluge of Luſt, and Fraud, and Violence would in a little Time overflow the whole Nation, if theſe wiſe Advocates for Morality were univerſally hearkned to? Laſtly, Opportunities do ſometimes offer in which a Man may wickedly make his Fortune, or indulge a Pleaſure, without fear of Temporal Damage, either in Reputation, Health, or Fortune. In ſuch Caſes what Reſtraint do they lie under who have no Regards beyond the Grave, the inward Compunctions of a wicked, as well as the Joys of an upright Mind, being grafted on the Senſe of another State?

The Thought, *that our Exiſtence terminates with this Life*, doth naturally check the Soul in any generous Purſuit, contract her Views, and fix them on temporary and ſelfiſh Ends. It dethrones the Reaſon, extinguiſhes all Noble and Heroic Sentiments, and ſubjects the Mind to the Slavery of every preſent Paſſion. The wiſe Heathens of Antiquity were not ignorant of this; hence they endeavoured, by Fables, and Conjectures, and the Glimmerings of Nature, to poſſeſs the Minds of Men with the Belief of a future State, which has been ſince brought to light by the Goſpel, and is now moſt inconſiſtently decry'd by a few weak Men, who would have us believe that they promote Virtue by turning Religion into Ridicule.

ADVERTISEMENTS.

Juſt Publiſh'd,

The Fourth Edition of CATO *a Tragedy. Written by Mr. Addiſon. Printed for J. Tonſon at Shakeſpear's Head over-againſt Catherine-ſtreet in the Strand.* N. B. *There is Sold a Pyrated Edition of this Play, wherein are numberleſs groſs Faults and ſeveral Scenes loſt out. The Edition Publiſhed and Corrected by the Author, and Printed for J. Tonſon, has a Head of Cato taken from an old Medal, Printed in the Title Page to diſtinguiſh it from that which is Spurious and Imperfect.*

This Day is Publiſh'd, New and Correct Editions of the following Books, viz.

Dryden's Fables in one Volume, 8vo. *Dryden's Juvenal and Milton's Paradiſe Regained, both in* 12mo. *Printed in Pocket Volumes, with an Elzever Letter, and adorned with Cuts deſigned and engraved by the beſt Hands. Sold by Jacob Tonſon at Shakeſpear's Head over-againſt Catherine-ſtreet in the Strand.*

AT the Requeſt of ſeveral Perſons of Quality that came on Thurſday laſt to the Mathematical WATER THEATRE of the late ingenious Mr. Winſtanly, when the Houſe was full that they could not come in, this preſent Day, between 5 and 6 a Clock, will be given to the Spectators, as before, 6 Sorts of Wine and Brandy to Drink the Queen's Health, all coming out of the Barrel, with Basket and Spaw Water; and as Peace is inlarged, there will be added Claret, Pale Ale, Stout, and Water, playing out of the Head of the Barrel when it is in the Pulley. The Houſe will be particularly adorned this Night with ſeveral new Figures and Machines playing of Water, and Fire mingling with Water, and a flying Dragon caſting out of his Mouth at the ſame time a large Stream of Water with Fire, and Perfumes, and Water playing out of great burning Flames, and a Proſpect of the Coaches going to Hide Park in Caſcades of Water. Boxes this Night 3 s. Pit 2 s. 6 d. Firſt Gallery 2 s. Upper Gallery 6 d. His Houſe at Littlebery in Eſſex is now in compleat Order, and both are ſhown for the Benefit of his Widow.

For the Benefit of Mrs. Lindſey.

At Mr. Hickford's great Room in James ſtreet againſt the Tennis Court near the Hay-market, to morrow being the 15th Inſtant, will be performed a Conſort of Vocal and Inſtrumental Muſick. Beginning at 8 a Clock. Tickets are to be had at the Room.

For the Benefit of Mr. St. Colombe.

A Conſort of Vocal and Inſtrumental Muſick will be performed this Day, being the 14th of May, at Mr. Hickford's Dancing-Room over-againſt the Tennis-Court in James-ſtreet near the Hay Market. To begin exactly at Seven a Clock. Tickets may be had at St James's Coffee-houſe.

For SALE by the CANDLE,

To Morrow the 15th Inſtant at Lloyd's Coffee-houſe in Lombard-ſtreet, at 6 a Clock in the Afternoon, (only one Pipe or Butt of Wine in a Lot) viz. 38 Pipes of Excellent new Red Oporto Wines, deep, bright, ſtrong and freſh, neat, an entire Parcel, juſt Landed, never in a Vault, under the Houſe of a Surgeon againſt the Pump in Crouched Fryers near Aldgate; and 24 Butts of Excellent new right Red Tent Wine, deep, bright, of the true Flavour and Neat, an entire Parcel, imported by the Norris Galley, now in a Vault under the Houſe of Charles Cæſar Eſq; at the Corner of Idle Lane, near the Church of St. Dunſton's in the Eaſt, between Tower-ſtreet and Thames-ſtreet. To be ſeen and taſted this Day from 8 to 1, and from 2 to 6, and all Day to Morrow (as above) till the Time of Sale. To be Sold by Tho. Tomkins broker in Seething-lane in Tower ſtreet.

LONDON: Printed for *J. Tonſon* in the *Strand*; and Sold by *A. Baldwin* in *Warwick-Lane*; where Advertiſements are taken in. 1713.